

# Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

## 2015 Lecture Series

Please join us for the Midewin Lecture Series this winter.

Lectures take place at The Midewin Welcome Center on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM. Doors open to the public at 6:30 PM with light refreshments provided by The Midewin Alliance.

Space is limited and seats cannot be guaranteed without an RSVP, so please reserve yours by calling 815-423-6370 or by emailing [Midewin\\_RSVP@fs.fed.us](mailto:Midewin_RSVP@fs.fed.us).

### **January 8 “History in a Bone: Hunting the Ghost Bison of Midewin”**

*Joseph Wheeler, Midewin Archaeologist*

Bison will soon be returning to Midewin. Midewin Archaeologist, Joe Wheeler, looks at the evidence, archaeological, paleontological, and palynological, of bison on the land that is now Midewin. Re-evaluation of the archaeological records and new data may cause us to re-think our view of what the area was like when the bison last roamed here, when they arrived, how they were used by Native Americans and when they disappeared from the region.

### **January 22 “A Sand Blast from the Past: An Exploration of the Unique Kankakee Sands Region.”**

*Janine and Floyd Catchpole*

Have you ever wondered why certain local soils are nearly pure sand? How did the sand get there and what unique natural communities thrive there now? Blame the sand on a traumatic event called the Kankakee Torrent that occurred about 15,000 years ago. A large glacial lake broke through its banks causing massive torrents of water to rush and scour over parts of what is now Northwest Indiana and North Central Illinois. The event lasted only a few days! Evidence of this event include the beautiful carved rocks of Starved Rock and Kankakee River State Park as well as many parks and preserves (such as Midewin) rich with unique sand prairies.

## **February 5 “On the Brink of Extinction: Efforts to Save the Blanding’s Turtle”**

*Dan Thompson, Ecologist*

The Blanding’s Turtle is an endangered species in Illinois and is in need of conservation. Join Ecologist Dan Thompson to learn about a local effort spearheaded by the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County nearly 20 years ago to try to recover a species on the brink of extinction. By creating a head-start program for Blanding’s Turtle hatchlings in captivity and releasing them as juveniles, scientists are witnessing some positive results. Through continued collaboration with many local partners and further understanding of how habitat loss and human impacts continue to add additional pressure and threats to populations, scientists hope for success in saving a species.

## **February 19 “Longhouses on the Prairie: Late Prehistoric Archaeology in the Chicago Region”**

*Madeleine McLeester*

The University of Chicago’s Madeleine McLeester explores late prehistoric life on the Eastern Prairies. Focusing on the Chicago Region, she describes her current research on the seasonal settlements of communities and connections with the historical records. Using pollen preserved in sediment for hundreds of years, she will explain how even microscopic artifacts can help archaeologists better understand how late prehistoric people used the prairie in their everyday lives.

## **March 5 “Storms of the Great Plains”**

*Danny Neal, Amateur Meteorologist and Storm Chaser*

Join Amateur Meteorologist and Storm Chaser Danny Neal as he discusses the ins and outs of Illinois weather, from climatology to extreme events. Danny was born and raised on the south side of Chicago and is a bit of a local celebrity on social media with over 112,000 followers on his Facebook page. Danny will share with you his passion for weather and how he was able to take his immense fear of severe weather as a child (thanks to the historic Plainfield F5 Tornado of 1990) and develop that into a love and appreciation of the beauty and awesomeness of nature. Danny will end with a brief presentation on severe weather preparedness and safety.

## March 19 **"A Vision of Vibrancy for our National Prairielands"**

Louise Phillips, Author and Artist

Louise Phillips is an author and artist residing in Washington, D.C. She has worked with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service, donating paintings to various locations around the country in an effort to connect children and young people to the earth through the arts. Midewin will be the recipient of one of these works. Louise's passion is to honor the creativity of the people who live in the communities surrounding places such as Midewin and inspire them to learn about, become stewards of and find excitement in exploring prairie lands. Louise will give an audio visual presentation of her paintings in various prairielands and will showcase a sample of a musical play for children called *"My Prairie Home."* Those in attendance are welcome and encouraged to share their own nature/prairie stories, music, songs, poems or art work.

April 2 **To Be Determined - Save the Date!**

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